

Allowable Subject Matter

Claims 1-45 are allowed. The following is an examiner's statement of reasons for allowance: none of the references either singularly or in combination teach or fairly suggests a user input device comprising a plurality of sensors in an array for providing N-way directional control, the array being for tactile actuation by a user; a controller responsive to the actuation of a sensor by itself or the simultaneous actuation of a pair of adjacent sensors, the controller being configured to produce one N different directional control signals upon actuation of a sensor by itself, or upon simultaneous actuation of an adjacent pair of sensors and wherein each of the N directional control signals belong to a first set of directional control signals or a second set of directional control signals, wherein each sensor of in the array is associated with only one of the directional control signals of the first set and wherein each of the directional control signals of the second set is associated with an adjacent pair of sensors in the array, but not every one of the adjacent pairs of sensors is associated with a directional control signal of the second set.

The references of record, Levy, Kling, and Thompson disclose a user input device with simultaneous actuation of sensors belonging to two different sets of control signals and that those sensors are adjacent to each other. However, none of the references either singularly or in combination teach or fairly suggest providing N-way directional control wherein both a first set of singularly

actuated sensors and a second set of simultaneously actuated adjacent sensors are directional control signals.

Any comments considered necessary by applicant must be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee and, to avoid processing delays, should preferably accompany the issue fee. Such submissions should be clearly labeled "Comments on Statement of Reasons for Allowance."

Conclusion

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to CHRISTOPHER E. LEIBY whose telephone number is (571)270-3142. The examiner can normally be reached on 9 - 5 Monday - Thursday.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Alex Eisen can be reached on 571-272-7687. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

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April 7th, 2008

/Alexander Eisen/
Supervisory Patent Examiner, Art Unit 2629